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JAN 14 1963

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**YOUR
CLUB
CAN
OPEN
THE DOOR
TO
EDUCATION**

U.S. Department
of Agriculture
Forest Service
PA-529
December 1962

CONSERVATION



F-383498

The dream of all small boys—a stream and fishing pole—what better reason for conservation education!

**YOUR
CLUB
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THE DOOR TO
CONSERVATION
EDUCATION**

A famous conservationist, known and respected for his genuine concern for all natural resources, was traveling through a farm area when he noticed a large gully near the road. The great size and raw newness of the wash prompted him to ask about it, and he learned that not long ago good farmland covered the rolling hillside where the gully now cut so ugly a gash.

At the foot of the slope stood a deserted school house, its doors and windows gone, its bell tower askew. As he gazed at the ruin, the man said thoughtfully, "I wonder what they taught in that school!"

Conservation—A Long-Range Challenge

This Nation has been blessed with abundant natural resources, but in this day of expanding population and growing industry, only the wise use of these resources will assure us of continuing growth and prosperity. Wise use, however, pre-





supposes an understanding of the complex relationships between water, soil, and forests, as well as the conflicting demands placed upon them by modern civilization.

Every year it becomes increasingly evident that conservation, like democracy, is everybody's business. More important, it is now evident that we must teach our children to understand and make wise use of the world around them through a coordinated program of Conservation Education in every classroom.

Many parents are aware that their children, particularly in the larger cities and towns, are missing satisfying experiences in field and forest, but they are uncertain about the correlation between pleasant outdoor experiences and the study of natural resources as a part of their education.

Because women's organizations have a long history of accomplishment in many phases of con-

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This vigorous young forest just didn't happen—it was planned and planted 10 years before.

servation, it is natural that they should be called upon to take the lead in bringing Conservation Education to the attention of teachers and school administrators throughout the country. With experience gained in sponsoring and promoting many civic and community projects, members of the various women's groups are accustomed to considering broad aspects of local and national questions and applying the influence of united action.

In accepting the challenge of introducing Conservation Education into all schools of the Nation, rural and urban, clubwomen will again be pioneering in a field of national and international importance. Wise use of natural resources, vital to the progress of civilization, presupposes an understanding of the interrelationships between water resources, use of the soil, timber resources, recreation needs, and the importance of wildlife and esthetic values. Conservation Education can give to

the coming generations of young people the necessary understandings for this complex task.

Assistance Is Available

It is the purpose of this booklet to offer to women's groups some basic guidance and suggested projects for implementing school programs in Conservation Education. The material is yours to adapt as may be needed in your individual situation or community. Technical advice and assistance in detailed planning are always available through your State and national conservation agencies.

This Nation has been blessed with abundance. Few people have felt any urgent need for long-range planning in the management of water, soil, or outdoor recreation areas. Early settlers burned timber stands simply to get rid of them in clearing the land for farming. Still larger areas were cut over indis-



criminally to provide lumber for homes, for fuel, and for a thousand other uses in an expanding Nation. By contrast, today about 50 million acres of land need to be planted in trees; another 150 million acres of forest lands need some kind of timber stand improvement to make it more productive.

Until recent years no one imagined that water resources could dwindle, since rainfall and snowpack constantly renewed the water supply. Today urban development and improved and expanding road networks, together with large areas of abused and mis-handled lands plus increasing agricultural needs have taken away much of the natural ground cover that formerly acted as a sponge to soak up and utilize rainfall and snowmelt, which now runs off wastefully in gutters and gullies.

Civilization has also taken its toll of water resources. The more civilized a nation becomes, the more water its people use as individuals. The



people of the United States now use 240 billion gallons of water daily. Sixty years ago the national requirement was 40 billion gallons daily. Experts agree that future years will bring proportionate increases.

In many parts of this country, wise use of natural resources must include management of rangelands which produce forage for livestock. Problems of numbers of livestock permitted to graze on rangelands must be solved, together with problems involving rehabilitation of deteriorated rangelands and control of undesirable or poisonous range plants.

Outdoor recreation has become a billion dollar industry in this country, geared to increased year-round leisure time of nearly all people. The snow you ski on in winter becomes the summer lake water on which you water ski or fish. But as land areas and water resources dwindle, where can people find

accommodations for the many types of outdoor recreation they enjoy, without destroying woodlands and overcrowding campground facilities?

These are only a few of the immediate conservation problems that must be faced by this generation and the next. They form an impressive array of evidence to support the need for educating our children in the wise use of all natural resources.

Establish a Plan

Where to begin on this problem of Conservation Education? Probably the best place for your organization to begin is with a preliminary study of local needs and opportunities relating to the integration of Conservation Education into the local and State school program.

Within your own organization it is essential that all club members understand clearly not only the



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Resource managers are anxious to tell adult and teachers groups about their conservation projects.

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goals but the terms and connotations involved in presenting Conservation Education to the public. Often a presentation has failed simply on the basis of semantics. For example, to many persons "conservation" is synonymous with "preservation."

Conservation as it relates to education should be clearly and consistently defined during every discussion as the wise use and development of all natural resources. Wise use will include preservation in certain individual instances, but it will concentrate on the coordination of all natural resources for the most effective use of each without detriment to the others.

A well-rounded plan of Conservation Education will include a survey of natural resources as they relate to public welfare. It will include the history of past uses of natural resources, both the good and the bad aspects. It will include an understanding of the pattern of public and private land owner-

ship and the responsibilities involved in each case. It will include a study of the water cycle and the need for protecting and developing watershed areas, and the influence of irrigation, hydroelectric installations, and navigation needs. It will include a consideration of forest lands as commercial timber areas, range, valuable watersheds, recreation areas, homes for wildlife, and wilderness. It must embrace an understanding of the benefits derived through the proper management of all resources.

In beginning the preliminary study of local and State conservation programs as a basis for presenting your Conservation Education plan to school administrators, the first step is to become acquainted with the people in your city or region who are in charge of the management of natural resources. From them you will gain a background of information on local, State, and national conservation programs and their needs. They can offer specific



examples of good and bad land, water, and timber use. They will be glad to cooperate in arranging programs of information, in furnishing printed material, and in sponsoring show-me trips to see specific uses and combinations of uses of natural resources.

Take time to review your State courses of study to determine the present status of Conservation Education and to find out how it is integrated into various subjects. In some places it will be helpful to understand the educational philosophy relative to Conservation Education in the local school system. This preliminary work will give you a more precise idea of the direction your plan of action should follow as you approach the school administrators.

After you have learned what is required by the State course of study, find out how much authority the local school superintendent or principal has in modifying the curriculum. He may need the

approval of the school board. If so, it may be necessary first to inform the school board members about the aims of Conservation Education.

As added background information, find out what preparation for Conservation Education is offered in your State universities and teacher training institutions by talking with heads of departments or reading the catalogs of the various colleges. Find out if there are summer classes or workshops that offer college credit in conservation to in-service teachers. This is important to teachers because often salary schedules are based on additional credits earned or graduate study courses completed. Many colleges are willing to add conservation workshops or classes during summer sessions if plans for such courses are presented in some detail with the backing of the resource people, who will furnish assistance in setting up conservation studies.

If a planned program is necessary for school board members, administrators, and teachers to



emphasize the need for Conservation Education, your contacts with resource people will prove invaluable. Your club can sponsor discussions and workshops to which local educators can be invited. Field and show-me trips are most effective in demonstrating what you mean by conservation. State and national conservation agencies will be glad to arrange such trips. If the resource people and teachers in your State or county have not met jointly to discuss conservation needs, your club can render a tremendous service to the community by bringing them together.

Conservation Education lends itself naturally to integration with other subjects. There is no need to ask for or to suggest additional classes. If the individual teachers have enthusiasm and are alert to the urgency of including Conservation Education in their regular classes, they will make use of all conservation materials supplied by your club as one of your services to the program.



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Students learn to understand the beauty and value of their natural resources.

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An outdoor classroom is anywhere you stop.



Public Information Opportunities

Your club should be constantly aware of public information opportunities. Organizations that carry out civic betterment programs can incorporate Conservation Education into campaigns for public office by asking for statements from candidates on local conservation problems. See to it that no opportunity is missed to bring to your community outstanding conservationists as speakers. Radio and television stations will make available public service time for these people, and such people are always good subjects for special feature stories in your local press.

Your club can sponsor community and school forests to be used in studying natural resources. There are many ways this can be done. Forest Service people are always interested in cooperating with civic and youth groups to arrange Youth Forest plantings, or to supervise the planting of trees by



any group. Land for a school forest, in which nature walks and special nature study projects can be added, may be purchased under the sponsorship of clubs and organizations.

Your club can encourage conservation projects by students to be entered in high school science fairs, sponsored in many States by colleges and universities. A special club prize in conservation would be an added incentive for youngsters to become interested in this aspect of science.

Your club can sponsor contests with a conservation theme. The results often far exceed expectation. Everything from art and essay contests to photography and exhibits can provide competition. Poster contests are popular with elementary and junior high school youngsters.

Your club can make use of each of these Conservation Education projects to add to the club scrapbook and record of achievement by seeing to

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Wildlife sanctuaries make interesting and exciting nature study areas and outdoor classrooms.



it that each meeting, project, or field trip is covered by the press of your community. If the newspaper cannot send a reporter or photographer, delegate some member of the club to take detailed notes that can be typed and offered to the newspapers. Most papers will want to develop their own story, so it is not necessary to compose a professional news story. It would be a worthwhile investment to hire a professional photographer for the more important events. Remember the old Chinese proverb—"one picture is worth a thousand words."

Your club can be the start and continuing support of a curriculum committee within the Parent-Teachers Association to promote Conservation Education.

Your club can provide scholarships for teachers to enable them to enroll in summer classes and workshops in conservation or to attend regional and national Conservation Education meetings.



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A forest has many backdrops for the outdoor classroom.



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Your club can interest a local firm or perhaps the Chamber of Commerce in sponsoring an educational film about your community, highlighting the story of Conservation Education in your schools. This will serve the double purpose of featuring the scenic beauties of your community and telling the story of constructive activities by its young people.

Your club can work up a detailed description of three or four local show-me trips in booklet form with space for notes by students or visitors. Often a local firm will sponsor printing costs of such booklets as a community service. Take the trouble to learn printing costs beforehand. Offset printing allows for the reproduction of photographs to make the booklet more attractive at relatively low cost. Careful note should be made of all landmarks, industrial sites, and historic locations, in addition to conservation projects. Of particular interest are watershed areas, soil and range man-

agement, trees and wildlife, waterways, highways, roads, and scenic areas. Note the use people are making of any and all natural resources—both the good and bad features.

Your club can offer a prize for the best essay or letter by a student following a conservation outing, program or any other special event. This type of contest may demand some time and effort on the part of a committee of several members, but it can be valuable in judging the success of a particular show-me trip or conservation project.

Your club can be of real service by stocking a reading shelf in the local schools with conservation materials and by subscribing to periodicals dealing with natural resources and their wise use.

In supporting the addition of Conservation Education to a school program, the club leaders and members should be cognizant of the means of integrating the materials. For example, in the ele-

mentary grades the objective should be to develop the students' interest in and appreciation for natural resources. This can be done by class discussion evolving from almost any subject matter, such as science, literature, or social studies. It can be supplemented by simple soil and water experiments, by field trips to natural areas, or by special out-of-doors projects involving a knowledge of the wise use of natural resources.

At the junior high school level, Conservation Education can be integrated with geography, history, and science. At this age, study programs on local conditions can begin. Your club members can offer liaison with resource people to aid the teacher, and can help overcome any local prejudice against show-me trips and special projects. If the school needs visual aids, the club may assist in financing the cost or in stimulating the Parent-Teacher Association to purchase them.

At the high school level, Conservation Education fits naturally into biology courses, American history civics, economics, and even into literature and art. Awareness of local problems, specific studies of control measures, and a general understanding of basic national problems can be readily acquired by high school students. Field trips and special assignments can be integrated with class work.

Outside reading lists can be provided at all levels to stimulate interest in various phases of conservation.

As a practical aid to classroom teaching, club members should be ready with suggestions for stimulating discussion when they meet with teachers' groups on Conservation Education.

One constant source of material is the daily newspaper. Children should be encouraged to bring to class stories dealing with any aspect of conservation, and to discuss everything from fires to floods to pictures of Smokey Bear. A story dealing with

conservation in any form can be used for class discussion and to suggest further reading.

For children living in a metropolitan area, a possible field trip is a visit to a new subdivision or to highway or freeway construction sites. Topics for discussion and investigation would range from land withdrawal to erosion control by planting trees, shrubs, or grass.

Vacation travel and camping experiences will prove more meaningful to the child who knows something about natural resources and the coordination of various resource uses, and who therefore knows some of the specific things to observe when traveling through forests and over mountain and plains country.



Reflected glory of nature's patterns.





Plan for the Future

For the first time in history, the ordinary citizen has uninterrupted leisure at his disposal—long weekends, holidays, vacations, and often years following early retirement. Improved roads and cars make it possible for him to travel to distant areas. Many of these people are fishermen, boaters, and campers who enjoy the out-of-doors, and consequently should be particularly alert to conservation needs. For the youngster whose first awareness of the out-of-doors comes through Conservation Education, the classwork often will produce unexpected dividends years later when pleasant memories of a show-me trip will bring him to the varied and beautiful outdoor world for his leisure time and recreation.

As you gather your material and plan your campaign to further Conservation Education, you in-

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A forest is born!

evitably will meet questions peculiar to your local scene. By adapting the suggestions here, you may arrive at a solution. If not, seek the help of the conservation resource people or of a conservation-minded teacher or school administrator.

Once you have convinced the community of your sincere interest in making education more meaningful to the child in today's world, you will find help and support coming your way from unexpected sources. Accept it gratefully and acknowledge it gracefully. You are, in the final analysis, making a long-term investment in the future of the Nation for the benefit of all.

The Goal . . .

One of the most dedicated conservationists in American history was Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the Forest Service, who wrote, "Without natural resources life itself is impossible . . . Upon them

we depend for every material necessity, comfort, convenience, and protection in our lives. Without abundant resources, prosperity is out of reach . . . they are the open door to economic and political progress. No generation can be allowed needlessly to damage or reduce the future general wealth and welfare by the way it uses or misuses any natural resource. To me, everywhere and always, the public good comes first."

Conservation Education, with your help, will carry forward in orderly fashion the ideals and wisdom of such leaders. Ours is the task of using the resources wisely and handing over our trusteeship in due time to a generation that has been trained to accept the responsibility of the good things of the earth and the fullness thereof.

Blessed of the Lord be his land . . . for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun . . . and for the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof . . . *Deuteronomy 33:13, 14, 16.*

Assistance and helpful publications are available from:

Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.

Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.

U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington 25, D.C.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D.C.

National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th Street NW., Washington 6, D.C.

State Foresters or State Conservation Departments

County Agent or Extension Service

Private conservation agencies and associations





A brief account of the outstanding events in the development of conservation of renewable natural resources in the United States is included in "Highlights in the History of Forest Conservation" issued by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C. Copy available from Forest Service without charge.

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